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DECATUR, ILLINOIS

CALENDAR OF HISTORIC EVENTS.

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CALENDAR OF

HISTORIC EVENTS

DECATUR, MACON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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Compliments of

THE MILLIKIN NATIONAL BANK OF DECATUR

• *NOW IN ITS 100TH YEAR* •

CALENDAR OF HISTORIC EVENTS

DECATUR, MACON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

●

Compiled by

The Decatur Public Library,

The Decatur Herald and Review,

and The Decatur Association of Commerce

●

Distributed by

THE MILLIKIN NATIONAL BANK

OF DECATUR

100 Years of Leadership

In Decatur and Macon County

ONE HUNDRED YEARS have elapsed since the founding of The Millikin National Bank of Decatur by James Millikin. Decatur was then a young, progressive community of only 3,800 people.

During its long history, The Millikin National Bank has been a financial cornerstone in Decatur, and has provided helpful credit and sound banking service to the growing community for five generations.

The Millikin National Bank and Decatur have "grown up" together.

Events of the past often cast their shadow into the future. Decatur has had an interesting growth and development during the past 100 years, and it has the spirit and the resources for continued growth during the next century.

The Calendar of Historic Events compiled recently by the Decatur Public Library, the Decatur Herald and Review and the Decatur Association of Commerce, records many of these interesting events in chronological order. We have arranged to print this booklet and distribute it in connection with the celebration of our own 100th Anniversary.

As we begin our second century of service, we believe the next 100 years will be the most interesting, the most challenging, and the most rewarding, in which man has had the privilege to live.

We again dedicate ourselves to the continued promotion of the commercial, industrial, and agricultural development of Decatur and Central Illinois.

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THE MILLIKIN NATIONAL BANK OF DECATUR

DECATUR, ILLINOIS

CALENDAR OF HISTORIC EVENTS
DECATUR, MACON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Named for Commodore Stephen Decatur,
(Born January 5, 1779—died March 22, 1820)
U. S. Naval Hero of the Tripolitanian War

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Compiled by the Decatur Public Library, the Decatur Herald and Review, and the Decatur Association of Commerce—February, 1960.

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Early Days—Evidence of Mound Builders in this area.
—Illini Indians, first recorded Indians here, driven out by Kickapoo Indians, a fierce and warlike tribe, in 1770-1773.

1778—Illinois a part of Virginia.

1787 to 1809—Illinois part of Indiana Territory.

1811—Great earthquake in Mississippi Valley.

1813—Soldier-scouts of Col. George Rogers Clark chase Indians through area.

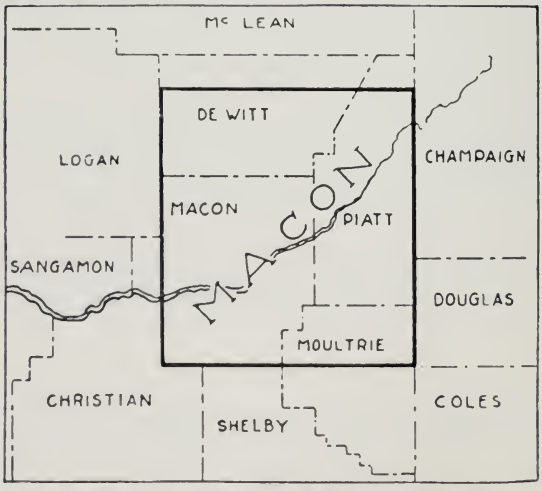
1816—First settlers, an Indian trading post was built by the Lorton Brothers eight miles northeast of Decatur, not far from junction of Friend's Creek and Sangamon River.

1818—State of Illinois established.

1820—First house built in Decatur by William Downing, a trapper-hunter, on south bank of Sangamon River near present location of Mueller Lodge.

1821—First permanent family—Leonard Stevens settled 3 miles northwest of Decatur on Stevens Creek.

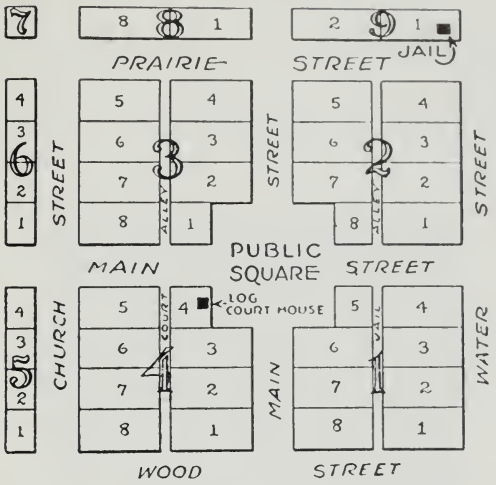
1825—First school building known as "Ward School" was erected 3½ miles southwest of Decatur on the old Widick place, later known as the P. M. Wikoff land.



1829—Macon County created, detached from Shelby county, named for Nathaniel Macon (1757-1837), Revolutionary War hero.

1829—First taxes levied on personal property including "watches and their appendages", raised $109.32½.

—First marriage license in Macon County issued to John Whitmore who, in June, married Delilah Miller.



—City of Decatur platted "after the form of Shelbyville", boundaries Prairie, Water, Wood and Church Streets.

—Log Cabin Court House in which Lincoln practiced built for $250, now in Fairview Park.

—First businessman—James Renshaw opens hotel-store-tavern.

1830—Earliest school, "a subscription school", held in a room on South Main Street.

—Postal service commissioned, Daniel McCall, first postmaster.

—Lincoln family arrived by ox cart at Lincoln Square (tablet on southeast corner.)

—Abraham Lincoln's family's first Illinois home built 8 miles west of Decatur—now Lincoln Trail Homestead Park.

1831—First church in Macon County, Mt. Zion Presbyterian.

—First road—The Springfield-Decatur-Paris road, improved.

1832—Black Hawk War—two local companies of mounted rangers, 50 men, join 5th regiment.

—First jail built at northwest corner of Prairie and Water Streets.

—First dam and saw mill built by David D. Allen, above a ford in the Sangamon River, at the foot of South Main Street.

—First physician, Dr. Crissey, locates here.

1833—General merchandise store built.

1834—First church in Decatur built, First Methodist Church.

—First Negro comes to Decatur.

1836—Decatur chosen as crossing of "Northern Cross" and "Central" Railroads.

—Decatur became a municipality under the town law with a Board of Trustees, Richard Oglesby (uncle of Governor Oglesby), first president.

1839—First steam powered factory built by William Allen—a combined saw mill, grist mill and carding factory.

1841—First fraternal order, Macon Lodge No. 8, A. F. and A. M. established.

1842—First school building built, a two-story building at Water and North Park Streets.

1846—Mexican War—Decatur 4th Regiment, 79 men, has 2 killed, 10 wounded at Cerro Gordo Pass, Mexico.

1847-57—Abraham Lincoln traveled this 8th Judicial Circuit; commemorative tablet at Art Center grounds.

1849—Orlando Powers (1812-1902) comes to Decatur on horseback.

1851—First newspaper—The Family Gazette, James Shoaff, editor, published June 26.

—"Township Organization" established by referendum.

1852—First telegraph comes to Decatur.

—First bank—a private safe installed in Peddecord & Burrows store which became the first banking institution in 1856.

1854—First Steam Railroad, the Great Western (Wabash) comes to Decatur in April followed by Central (Illinois Central) in October.

—First piano (Mrs. Jane Johns) brought by ox-cart to Decatur; Lincoln helped move it in and set it up at hotel.

—V. H. Parke founds Parke & Son—warehousing and moving business.

1855—First park—Central Park—created.

—Decatur was granted a charter as a city, aldermanic form of city government (4 wards) established, John P. Post, first Mayor.

1856—James Millikin comes to Decatur.

—D. S. Shellabarger organized milling company.

—W. C. Starr Company (Harness Shop) founded by J. G. Starr.

1857—The Mueller Company founded by Hieronymous Mueller.

—First public school building, called "Big Brick", was opened at site of present Gastman school.

—First Band of Decatur organized—called "Goodman's Band".

1858—First parochial school started by Miss Sheperd in a house in the 600 block West Prairie Avenue.

—Michl's Tobacco Co. founded—pioneer tobacco manufacturers of Illinois.

1859—Morehouse & Wells Company founded.

1860—First Census—city population, 3,839; county, 13,738.

—Decatur township organized.

—State Republican Convention in Decatur—first to endorse Abraham Lincoln, "the Railsplitter", for President—commemorative tablet at Main and State Streets.

—Millikin Bank started, became a national bank in 1897.

—First Board of Supervisors was elected, Henry B. Durfee (Decatur), chosen chairman.

—*MILLIKIN BANK OPENS AS "J. MILLIKIN, BANKER", IN 100 BLOCK NORTH MERCHANT ST.*

1861—Civil War—commemorative tablet, Fairview Park—Company I, 7th Illinois Cavalry active 4 years, 9 major engagements; 8th Illinois Infantry, 7 major engagements, active 5 years; 21st Illinois Infantry, 7 major engagements, 4 years; 35th Regiment Infantry, 8 engagements, 3 years; 41st Illinois Infantry, 7 major engagements, 3 years; 63rd Infantry, 6 major encounters, Sherman's March, 4 years; 116th Illinois Infantry, 21 engagements, 4 years service, Sherman's March.

1862—First high school opened in the "Big Brick".

1863—*JAMES MILLIKIN, BANKER, MOVES BANK TO 100 BLOCK EAST MAIN STREET.*

1864—Union Iron Works begins, made corn shellers.

1865—Decatur's first and only Governor of Illinois, Richard J. Oglesby (1824-1899)—"Civil War Governor", 1865-69; 1873; 1885-89; U. S. Senator, 1873-79.
—Special charter granted public schools.
—Wait-Cahill Company organized.
—St. Nicholas Hotel opened.

1866—First Post of the Grand Army of the Republic organized here, commemorative tablet, Fairview Park.
—Volunteer Fire Department organized.
—Organized baseball starts.

1867—Ladies' Library Association established to provide public library and reading room.

1868—Gas lighting system established.
—Young and Norman establish a steam laundry—now Norman's.

1869—Municipal water system established and sewer system built.
—Bonds issued to buy stock to encourage corporations formed to promote railroad developments, were approved by Decatur Township and Macon county official action.
—Check-row planter invented and manufactured by L. L. Haworth & Sons.
—First theater opened—Smith's Theater.
—Linn & Scruggs department store opens for business.
—Water-main tapping machine invented by Hieronymous Mueller, "village plumber".
—New high school building at North and Broadway.

1870—Population—city, 7,161; county, 26,481.
—Decatur water works plant built.

1872—"Weekly Decatur Review" begins publication.
—Chambers-Bering-Quinlan farm equipment manufacturers, organized.
—Post Jewelry Store opens.

1873—Decatur National Bank organized, became National Bank of Decatur in 1893.
—Ursuline Sisters come from Alton and open St. Teresa's Academy.
—Union Iron Works organized.

1875—Decatur Public Library formed from Ladies Library Association.

1876—Horse drawn street cars begin operation; horses watered from well in Lincoln Square.

1877—First coal mine opened by Decatur Coal Company.
—Bachrach's (Men's Store) founded.

1878—G. S. Lyon organizes firm which became Lyon Lumber and Manufacturing Company.

1879—First telephone exchange starts with 33 phones.
—"Saturday Herald" begins publication.
—First labor union—Cigar Makers Union.

1880—Population, city, 9,547; county, 30,665.
—Decatur Woman's Club organized.
—First hospital—St. Mary's opens.
—Bold Machine Works organized.
—William Oakes Machinery Co. begins.

—JAMES MILLIKIN, BANKER, MOVES TO A BUILDING ON THE PRESENT BANK SITE IN THE 100 BLOCK NORTH WATER STREET.

1883—Carbon-arc electric lights on light towers put in operation.
—Citizens National Bank, Gorin, Dawson & Co., Bankers, organized, became Citizens National Bank in 1891.
—Decatur Club organized.

1884—First street paved with a "two course brick", around Lincoln Square.
—Brown's Business College opened.
—Wabash Railroad shops moved here from Peoria.
—Free delivery of mail started.
—First paid fire department organized.

1885—First Fire Engine (hose wagon and team) purchased.
—Field & Shorb Company founded.

1886—First building code and zoning ordinance adopted.
—Irwin, Neisler & Co., pharmaceuticals, organized.

1888—Leader Iron Works founded.

1889—Textile industry founded—(Race Clothing Mfg. Co.), now Home Manufacturing Co.
—First electric street car in Illinois operates here.
—Powers Grand Opera House opens.

1890—Population, city, 16,841; county, 38,083.
—Decatur Trunk Factory opens.

1895—First cereal oil mill in U. S. started. (Pratt Cereal Oil Co.)
—Review Printing & Stationery Co. (Huston-Patterson Corporation) organized.
—First automobile appears, H. Mueller's car, a Benz motor wagon, imported from Germany.
—Home Manufacturing Company (oldest textile firm) starts.
—Folrath Shoe Store opened by David B. Folrath.
—Oscar B. Mueller wins first auto race in world at Chicago.

1896—Present Transfer House erected.

—OLD BUILDING WAS DEMOLISHED AND PRESENT MILLIKIN BANK BUILDING WAS BUILT.

1897—*J. MILLIKIN & CO. BANK BECOMES A NATIONAL BANK, NAME CHANGED TO THE MILLIKIN NATIONAL BANK OF DECATUR.*

—Flint, Eaton & Co., pharmaceuticals, organized.

—Young's Packing Co. organized.

1898—Spanish-American War, Company H, 5th Regiment, Illinois National Guards, 3 years service.

—A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company organized in Baltimore.

—First grain inspector, James Garland, appointed.

1900—Population, city, 20,754; county, 44,003.

—Fly-swatter invented by R. R. Montgomery.

—Osgood & Sons, Inc., founded.

1901—Professional league baseball organized.

1903—James Millikin University dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt.

—Association of Commerce, "Decatur's Commercial Club", organized to secure industries.

—Present Library building presented through Carnegie Foundation.

—Mississippi Valley Structural Steel (Decatur Bridge Company) established.

—Benson Creamery Co. founded.

1904—First electric railroad (Illinois Traction System) begins operation.

1906—First movie house ("The Nickelodeon") at northeast corner of William and Water.
—Y. M. C. A. building at 151 W. Prairie opened to public.

1907—Illinois Traction System opens repair shops.

1908—First corn harvester invented here by Baird.
—"Billy" Sunday Tabernacle revival.

1909—James Millikin, banker and philanthropist, dies March 2.
—A. E. Staley buys the Pratt Cereal Mill of Decatur.

1910—Population, city, 31,140; county, 54,186.
—A. W. Cash Valves invented
—First airplane flight in this locality, a Curtiss biplane, flown at the race track (Hess Park).

1911—Commission form of city government established.

1912—A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company moves to Decatur from Baltimore and begins production of corn starch.

1914—Powers Building and Linn & Scruggs (entire block) destroyed by fire.
—Rotary Club No. 180 organized.
—Decatur Pump Co. begins operations.

1915—Association of Commerce "passed the hat" for $500 to oil first road south from Decatur toward Pana.

1916—Hotel Orlando (250 rooms) opened.
—Decatur and Macon County Hospital opened. Cost $246,849.00.

1917—World War I, National Guard becomes Company A, 124th Machine Gun Battalion; 3,586 in service from area, some 100 casualties.
—Institute of Civic Arts established by Anna B. Millikin estate (with gift of James Millikin home) (built in 1876).
—Decatur Sanitary District voted.

1919—Millikin wing built at Decatur & Macon County Hospital.
—Lions Club organized in Decatur.

1920—Population, city, 43,818; county, 65,175.
—First city plan, financed by subscription, (third such plan among U. S. cities.)
—First hard road built to west (Route 10, now U. S. 36).
—Grain-trade organized within Association of Commerce to promote grain market.
—Kiwanis Club of Decatur organized.

1921—Sunnyside Golf Club (now Scovill Park) built west of Decatur.

1922—First soybeans processed in the United States at Decatur by A. E. Staley Manufacturing Company.
—Community Chest organized.

1923—Lake Decatur created by Decatur Water Supply Company, a non-profit citizens organization.
—Tuberculosis Sanatorium opened, July 1923.
—Illinois Power Co. moves general office from Champaign to Decatur.

1924—Decatur Park District established.
—J. J. Moran erects first funeral home, Eldorado and Water streets.
—First boulevard stop signs erected.
—First women (3) elected Assistant County Supervisors.

1925—First radio broadcast (W.J.B.L., changed to W.S.O.Y. in 1939)
—First airport built (canvas hangar) at Wyckles corner.

1927—Grigoleit Co, molded plastics, founded.

1929—Centennial celebration, July.

1930—Population, city, 57,510; county, 81,731.
—A. W. Burks pumps invented.
—Dr. Williams A. Barnes, surgeon and noted entomologist, dies May 2.

1931—First "black top" county road laid.

1932—Lake Decatur acquired by city.

1935—Decatur's new Post Office dedicated.

1936—Community Recreation program established.
—Buses replace street cars.
—Second city plan, financed by local governmental units, completed.
—Belt-line (13 mile highway around city) completed.

1938—Spencer Kellogg & Sons, Inc., soybean plant, built.

1939—Archer-Daniels-Midland Co., soybean processing plant, located here.

1940—Population, city, 59,510; county, 84,693.
—A. E. Staley, Sr., dies December 26.

1941—World War II, National Guard leaves for 4 years service; 8,987 men and women in service from area, 353 casualties.
—New County Building completed.

1942—Decatur industry converts to war production.
—Victory Military Engine Co. builds Diesel engines—operated by Caterpillar Tractor Co.
—Two shell loading plants built in Illiopolis.

1943—County Zoning established.

1944—Atom bomb component made here in government-built Garfield plant.
—Decatur Art Center organized under joint management with Millikin University.
—Latham wing added to Decatur & Macon County Hospital.
—LePage's, Inc (now Permacel) opens Decatur plant.

1945—Decatur referred to as "Soybean Capital of the World," by Secretary Clinton P. Anderson, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

1946—Municipal airport completed.
—U. S. Signal Depot established here.
—First "Frequency Modulation" broadcast, W.S.O.Y. - F.M.
—"Lincoln the Lawyer", statue by Lovet-Lorski at County Building, dedicated.

1947—General Electric plastics plant begins operations.

1948—Lincoln statue by Fred Torrey, "At 21 I came to Illinois" erected on Millikin University campus by State of Illinois.

1949—W.D.Z., third oldest radio station in U. S. moved here from Tuscola.

1950—Census showed city population 66,269 and county population of 98,853.
—Borg Warner Corporation, Marvel-Schebler Products Division, started operations.
—Ozark Air Lines began first scheduled air service here.
—Guy N. Scovill, philanthropist, dies March 30.
—South Shores development started.
—Rand McNally & Co. opens Decatur plant.

1951—First one-way streets—Franklin and Church.

1952—A statue of Stephen Decatur, by John David Brcin, unveiled on the Art Center grounds.
—The new $1,500,000 Y. M. C. A. building opened.
—First Lochner highway street and highway improvement made by state.
—Post-Korean-War plan for major public improvements: interceptor sewers, schools, parks, off-street parking, water and streets.
—Ralston-Purina Co. (Checkerboard Soybean Co.) buys Decatur plant.

1953—WTVP of Decatur, WCIA of Champaign and WICS of Springfield started television operations.
—Mass gamma globulin shots were given to help fight polio.
—An urban renewal program first proposed.
—$4.2 million bond issue for interceptor sewers approved.

1954—Caterpillar Tractor Co. Decatur Plant started construction of its motor grader and wheel tractor plant.
—New interceptor sewer system completed.
—Oscar Dorr wing added to Decatur & Macon County Hospital.
—United Fund organized.

1955—The Illinois Terminal Railroad abandoned passenger service.
—The $1,015,000 Scovill Science Hall dedicated at Millikin University.
—First Salk vaccine inoculations for polio are given.
—A. E. Staley Bridge at Nelson Park dedicated along with first 4-lane highway, Route 36, to the east.
—Scovill Science building opens at Millikin University.

1956—The $709,144 Bascule gate installation on the Lake Decatur Dam was completed.
—The Caterpillar Tractor Co. holds open house to celebrate the beginning of its full production in Decatur plant.
—Decatur Board of Education changed from three to seven members.
—School referendum of $4.2 million provides new schools, approved.

1957—Douglas MacArthur High School opened in the fall.
—The city's three-story parking structure opened.
—The Illinois Power Company opened its new office building on 27th Street.
—Lincoln Homesite Park dedicated near Harristown.
—Special city census shows 77,045 people.
—A. E. Staley Mfg. Co. begins moving corn and beans on the longest conveyor belt in the world.
—First city planner hired.
—Soy Capital and Northtown banks open.
—Planning office established by city, county, township, schools, sanitary and park districts.

1958—Fairview Plaza Shopping Center opened.
—The new Temple B'Nai Abraham was dedicated.
—Ground was broken for the new $7.5 million St. Mary's Hospital.
—Council-Manager form of city government voted.
—Second highway (Lochner Plan) improvement program.
—Third city plan completed.
—Borg-Warner Corporation establishes York Division in Decatur.

1959—New Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company plant starts operation.
—Urban renewal plan approved for Decatur.
—Lincoln log cabin rebuilt and moved to northeast corner of Fairview Park.
—Lakeview community unit school district annexed to Decatur School District.
—First city manager takes office.

1960—Fire, at 4 degrees below zero, destroys Lincoln Square Theatre and four stores.

—*THE MILLIKIN NATIONAL BANK CELEBRATES ITS 100th ANNIVERSARY.*

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